

met Ryan Brandt Young. I extend my deepest sympathies to his family and friends. He will be deeply missed and his service was greatly appreciated.

STATEMENT TO COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT REFORM

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 15, 2005*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, on September 15, 2005, I submitted the following statement during a hearing in the Committee on Government Reform entitled, "Back to the Drawing Board: A First Look at Lessons Learned from Katrina":

Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Davis, for agreeing last week to hold hearings in this Committee on what went wrong with the government response to Hurricane Katrina. This Committee is the most important venue within the House of Representatives for federal government oversight and I am grateful for your leadership. Interestingly, this first hearing will not focus on Hurricane Katrina and the disaster in New Orleans and the surrounding area, but will focus on 3 other cities that are vulnerable to a natural disaster or terrorist attack: Los Angeles, Miami and Washington, D.C. Further, the hearing is intended to examine the local response to crisis, rather than the federal response, to determine how prepared we are to handle another disaster.

Local, state and federal government all play key roles in handling a disaster and disaster relief, but let's face it: the federal government has the largest resources and should have the greatest ability to deal with a serious disaster in our nation. The first lesson we have learned from Katrina is that this proved not to be the case. The federal government was slow to act and the disaster was far too great for city and state government to handle alone.

The second lesson we have learned from Katrina is that we have not learned the lesson from the Iraq war regarding Halliburton. Halliburton overcharged the government at the taxpayer's expense during the Iraq war. Days after Katrina struck, Halliburton was one of the earliest companies awarded no-bid contracts, to repair 3 different Navy facilities in Mississippi. The flawed contracting procedures of the Iraq war are rearing their ugly head in the recovery of Hurricane Katrina. Congress has already appropriated \$62 billion so far and more is surely to come. Yet the contracts awarded have been cost-plus and no bid contracts, lacking oversight and transparency.

There is an infinite number of issues on the federal level that seriously need to be explored. Why aren't more steps being taken to hire local displaced workers to rebuild their towns and cities? How has the merger of FEMA into the Department of Homeland Security played a role in FEMA's ability as an agency? Why didn't FEMA's Hurricane Pam study—contracted out to IEA to investigate what would happen if a hurricane hit the gulf coast—better prepare the federal response to the Katrina disaster?

As Chairman Davis indicated, however, we'll get into more of these federal issues at future hearings.

A very important local issue that should be considered today is the morality of establishing a mandatory evacuation when there are people who lack the ability to evacuate. We saw this in New Orleans with Hurricane

Katrina. Everyone was forced to evacuate, but not everyone could. There were people in hospitals and nursing homes and people too poor and without cars that were simply left behind. How were these people supposed to leave? How might there have been better emergency plans in place to facilitate the evacuation of these citizens? In one reported story, a dead body was left to decay for over 2 weeks in the Algiers neighborhood of New Orleans, despite swarms of local police, Louisiana state troopers and the Army. Residents believed that law enforcement officials left the body there purposely to encourage the residents to evacuate. If their belief is true, such a practice is truly shameful and must be addressed.

Another issue related to local government observed in New Orleans with the enforced racism that occurred through the application of two standards of justice by law enforcement officials. Local law enforcement reportedly allowed white armed vigilantes to ride throughout the city but would not allow the same for black residents. According to Malik Rahim, a community organizer who recently ran for city council in New Orleans, "If a white person was taking something, he was taking food for his family. But if a black was taking something, he was looting." Rahim further described how the white vigilantes were shooting blacks in his neighborhood under the guise that they were protecting his neighborhood, and were even bragging about it. He said he never before seen New Orleans come so close to breaking into a race riot.

If a race riot had broken out in New Orleans the crisis situation there would have become far more disastrous. How can local governments ensure that one standard of justice is applied equally in times of disaster?

I hope this hearing will address the many concerns raised and what changes are necessary in the local planning for disasters in other large cities. Moreover, I look forward to the series of hearings that this Committee intends to hold that will specifically look at the federal response to Hurricane Katrina.

IN LASTING MEMORY OF MAYOR  
PAUL B. CHOATE

**HON. MIKE ROSS**

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 15, 2005*

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor of the life and legacy of Mayor Paul B. Choate, who passed away at the age of 71 on August 5, 2005. Mayor Choate was born on May 28, 1934 in Lonoke, Arkansas.

Mayor Choate graduated in 1957 from the State Teacher's College and taught school in Paris, Arkansas. He was also a retired biologist with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. In 1967, Mayor Choate moved to Hempstead County and distinguished himself as the first juvenile judge and helped to establish Medical Park Hospital in Hope where he served as a Hempstead County Memorial Hospital Board member.

Mayor Choate was an economic ambassador for the small town of Blevins. As Mayor, he updated the city's sewer system, helped to bring industry to the city, and acquired one of only four generators obtainable from the state for Blevins during the horrific ice storm of 2000 that paralyzed much of Arkansas.

Perhaps what drove Mayor Choate the most was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. In

Blevins, he was a founding minister of the World of Faith Church and a pastor at the Marlbrook Baptist Church for 7 years.

Mayor Choate truly led an exemplary life and will forever be remembered for his dedication to his family, his community, and the church. My deepest sympathies go out to his wife, Pamela D. Young Choate, their four sons, David, Roy, Timothy, and Andrew, his brothers, William King and Lee King, his sister, Julia, his eight grandchildren and ten great grandchildren.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL  
JOHN W. HOLLY

**HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 15, 2005*

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding career and contributions of Major General John W. Holly. General Holly is retiring from his position as Deputy Director of the Missile Defense Agency, the Program Executive Officer for Ballistic Missile Defense System, and the Director of the Joint National Integration Center.

Prior to assuming his current position, General Holly was the Program Director of the Missile Defense Agency's Ground-based Mid-course Defense (GMD) Joint Program Office.

General Holly was an integral part in the development, construction, initial testing, and deployment of the nation's GMD system, which gives our nation new and advanced capabilities to defend itself against long-range ballistic missile attacks.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank General Holly for his work developing our nation's defense capabilities against incoming missile threats. I strongly believe that his efforts have significantly contributed to the defense of our nation.

During General Holly's time in Huntsville, I enjoyed working with him as he led the development of the Ground-Based Missile Defense system. I know his leadership and dedication will be sorely missed.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in North Alabama, I rise to express my gratitude to Major General John W. Holly for his many years of service in our nation's military.

IN HONOR OF RAY STEVENS,  
PRESIDENT OF THE DELAWARE  
VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSO-  
CIATION

**HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 15, 2005*

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to Ray Stevens, the outgoing President of the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association (DVFA). During his tenure, Ray has served with distinction in a variety of positions within Delaware's Fire Service.

Originally joining the Selbyville, Delaware Volunteer Fire Company in July of 1967, Ray remains an active member to this day. From 1968 through 1971, Ray served as the 1st and